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THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING.

BEING AN

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE

OF

MRS. SIMEON HAYS,

OF CHESTER, WARREN CO., N. Y.

BY REV. A. D. MILNE,

This Woman has lived without partaking of any solid nourishment since June 1856, or any nourishment whatever since the 20th of February 1857, retaining her usual amount of flesh and healthy appearance of the skin.

GLEN'S FALLS,
MESSENGER BOOK AND JOB OFFICE,
1858.

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1858.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858,
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MICROFILMED
AT HARVARD

AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

In the following pages we shall not advance any opinion of our own, touching the cause or nature of this woman's singular disease, but simply collect, arrange and present what others have advanced. We may say, however, that we have been for many years acquainted with all, or nearly all, whose names appear in this narrative, and pronounce them entirely reliable in every respect, though testifying to a case that may have no recorded parallel. Mrs. Simeon Hays, known throughout the United States and other countries as "THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING," is the daughter of Joseph and Lydia Carpenter, living in the town of Chester, Warren County, N. Y., and is the fifth of eleven children. The family are healthy and free from constitutional or organic disease, and have had but little sickness of any kind, with the exception of the mother, who is troubled with Asthma.

Mrs. Hays, up to a short time after the birth of her youngest child enjoyed perfect health. Her parents are members of the Baptist Church, in good standing, and she herself became a member of that communion at the early age of fourteen, continuing to adorn her profession by a consistant walk and conversation. During the early part of her sickness, while able to converse and express her wishes, she greatly desired religious conversation, and solicited her husband to have meetings occasionally in her room, that she might enjoy the privilege of listening to the voice of prayer and exhortation. This wish was gratified as often as possible, but as her disease increased she became apparently unconscious of things transpiring around her, being in spasms the greater part of the time. She has continued in a fit—or spasm, for the period of seven weeks and four days, and often for two, three and four weeks, with intervals of only a few seconds, or minutes. Short as these intervals are, when they occur she appears to be perfectly aware of her condition, giving evidence that the mental powers are yet in health and strength. It was some time before the case of Mrs. Hays attracted special attention outside the community where she resided, her physician and parents, simply thought it a

very severe case of one of the numerous diseases to which females are liable, and that death would soon terminate her sufferings. Week after week, and month after month, they anxiously watched and waited for the moment of her release, till it finally became evident, that by the power of some, to them, unknown law, she was bound to life.

While editor of the Glen's Falls *Messenger*, we received on the 27th of February 1857, the following communication from a member of the Chester Baptist Church, a man of good judgment and undoubted piety:—

SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS.

Mr. Editor:—Last week I was at the head of Brant Lake on business, and having often heard strange things about Mr. Simeon Hays' wife, I resolved to satisfy myself by going to see her; and from my acquaintance with Mr. Hays I felt assured that what he told me I might rely upon. From him I learned the following facts:

That his wife (who is a daughter of Bro. Jos. Carpenter, of Chester) has not walked a step since the 8th of November 1854, that she was taken with fits about the midle of June, 1855, which have continued ever since, but are much lighter now, than formely; the duration of her fits have been from a few hours to eighteen days, and it is only in the intervals between those fits that she can receive any nourishment, or receive or give any communications. The duration of

these intervals have been from a few seconds to about five minutes. Now, for the most mysterious part of the story. From the 28th of June 1855, to the 28th of June 1856, she subsisted entirely on apple and berry sauce, not averaging more than from three to four spoonfuls per day, and more nourishing food being instantly vomited. Since the 28th of June 1856, up to the 20th of February 1857, the day I saw her, all she has taken has been in the liquid state, consisting chiefly in lemonade, to make which about one pound and a half of sugar, and sixteen lemons had been used, add to this 20 drops of laudunam, two tea spoonfuls of berry juice and one of current juice, and you have all the nourishment she had taken between the two dates above mentioned. She was said to be in a fit when I arrived there, and I had an opportunity of seeing her in the various stages. She lay on her left side, her neck bent back, her lips apart, and her tongue protruding so as to fill the orifice which had to be often wet to keep it from drying. Her head was constantly on the move, first right and then left, about twice in a second, and her left shoulder was in more violent motion. While I stood watching her motions she suddenly raised almost to a sitting posture, and as suddenly threw herself back with her neck bent backwards so as to fall with her forehead on the pillow—these motions were repeated with increasing violence, until her husband took hold of her to prevent her from hurting herself. Surely, thought I, it is my lot to be present and behold this afflicted woman released from all earthly sufferings, for, although I had seen many persons in fits, I nev-

er saw a poor human frame so long in such violent agitation. But I was mistaken, she again inhaled the vital air and was laid back on her pillow. She is now blind, and has not spoken a loud word for a long time. Soon after she ceased to eat common food, she said that in her, God would show to the world that he had power to keep people alive without eating or drinking, that God had nearly accomplished his work with her, and she thought she would get well. In about three quarters of an hour after she came out of her spasm, while Mr. Hays and myself were conversing in another room, he sprang from his seat, saying, "There! she has come out of her fit," and immediately he was by her side asking her questions. I got into the room time enough to see her give a negative answer to the question, "Do you wish to take anything?" by shaking her head, and affirmative by nodding her head to other questions, but before another was fairly asked she was in another fit, to last perhaps a week or longer. She does not breathe at all while in one of her spasms, and how many spasms she has in a day or week I did not ascertain. Mr. Hays has to do the work both in-doors and out, except what his two girls can do, one eight and the other six years old, yet everything looks neat and clean about the house. Mr. Hays lives in the town of Horicon, about half-way between Brant Lake and Valentine's Pond, and about three miles from Stickney's Mill. I hope others will take the pains to go and see, and enquire for themselves, and be sure to have a little change, for they are needy.

SAMUEL C. DICKINSON.

The above communication soon brought the case into notice, and many unacquainted with the family, unhesitatingly pronounced the whole a humbug. Mr. Hays keenly felt the injustice done to himself and wife, and his friends took the only measure in their power to do away such suspicions. On the 7th of April the following communication was received:

HORICON, April 5th, 1857.

MR. A. D. MILNE:

Dear Sir—Having noticed that many are inclined to discredit the statements given in your paper over the signature of "S. C. Dickinson," respecting the case of Mrs. Hays of this town, I have taken the trouble to ascertain the facts of the case, and to present them verified by those who have been personally cognizant of them as they have occurred.

Mrs. Betsey Hays, wife of Simeon Hays, of Horicon, was taken sick on the 8th day of November, 1854, and remained in a feeble state until the fore part of June, 1855, at which time she was taken with symptoms of an alarming character, which entirely baffled the skill of the attending physician, and has remained from that time to the present, in a state of almost entire unconsciousness, and without having partaken of any solid food, and hardly of anything in the form or nature of nourishment. From the first day of June 1855, she has taken nothing but occasionally a spoonful of cold water, or a few drops of laudunam. She has fits of a singular

character, and at times remains in one continuous fit from 12 to 18 days; from the 16th day of January last to the 3d day of February, she remained in a fit. On the first day of January 1856, she threw herself backward and forward, bringing her head and feet nearly together, 315 times without intermission. From the 15th day of August last to the 26th of November, a period of three months and eleven days, she took only five spoonfuls of water and twenty drops of laudanum. She has been at different periods from fifty to one hundred and fifty days without evacuation of the bowels, and nearly the same time without urinary evacuations. She has been blind from the first of June 1856, and has been in a state of almost entire unconsciousness, and notwithstanding she thus lives, she has during the whole time been subject to convulsions of a most wonderful character, in which every nerve in the system seems strained to its utmost capacity. She is young, being only about 27 years of age, and previous to the period of the sickness above mentioned, was of a robust constitution. I have known her from her childhood; have seen her at different times during her present prostration, and have every reason to believe that the foregoing statements are fully correct. I am further informed, at the moment of writing, that at the present time, and for some time past she is subject to convulsions of a few minutes duration with intervals of only a few moments, and at the end of each convulsion remains from four to ten minutes before catching her breath, which is produced by constantly fanning her during that period. I was there in

company with some others not long since and saw her, and witnessed one of her convulsions, and in my judgment, when she fell back at each time, which was frequent during the convulsion, I witnessed her head being thrown back so that she struck upon the top of her head, each blow was sufficient to have fractured her skull, if she had fallen upon a hard substance instead of the pillows placed beneath her. Yours, &c.,

W. J. SMITH.

P. S. At this date she has swallowed nothing, even water, since the 20th of February last.

WARREN COUNTY, ss:—Simeon Hays, being dully sworn, deposes and says, that he is the husband of the above named Betsey Hays, that he has been in attendance upon her almost continually during the sickness above alluded to, and the foregoing statements are true in every essential particular.

SIMEON HAYS.

Subscribed and sworn, April 5th, 1857, before me,

W. J. SMITH Justice of the Peace.

This may certfy that we, the undersigned, are, and have been acquainted with the above named Simeon Hays, from his childhood, and believe him fully entitled to belief in the foregoing statement:

W. J. SMITH, E. M. BAXTER, J. N. BARTON, EBENEZER MONROE, IRA DUEL, J. STREETER, JOSEPH F. SMITH, CHAS. W. OSBORN, J. HILL, HOMER DAVIS, R. P. SMITH, DAVID VAUGHN, JOHN H. SMITH, Jr., HARVEY S. WATERS.

One would suppose that the above testimony would have been sufficient, but no, it was too marvellous and hard to believe. A watch was instituted, which continued night and day for

two weeks, and resulted in sustaining to the utmost, the above facts. In reference to this watch we find in our editorial columns September 17th 1857, the following:

Mrs. Hays.—We publish an article in another column, on the extraordinary case of Mrs. Hays, a case we believe unprecedented in the annals of medical science. We do not endorse the views of the writer. Next week we will give place to a letter, embracing views completely antagonistic to those contained in the letter published in the present number. Meantime we would call attention to an extract from a letter of a valued friend, dated Sept. 12th, 1857. It reads as follows:

"I was at S. Hays' not long since, in company with Elder Cobb. Mrs. Hays has not altered much in her looks since I saw her on the 20th of February last. Mr. Hays says, she has taken no medicine, food or drink of any kind since that date, and I still confide in what he says; but many do not, and Mr. Hays feels bad about it. To gratify him, myself and others, we are about to organize a thorough watch, to be kept up for two or three weeks, to detect the deception if there is any, and the skeptical are invited to take part in the watch, but are requested to treat Mr. Hays with decency until he is found to be a deceiver."

The article referred to on another page is from the pen of the present editor of the Glen's Falls *Messenger*, who has since done abundant

justice to Mr. Hays, by publicly announcing his firm conviction of the truthfulness of his statements—that the fact is unquestionable,—the woman does live without eating.

We give the communication as a sample of many articles that we received about that time, showing that no effort was left untried to disprove the statements, but it could not be done.

CAN A PERSON LIVE WITHOUT FOOD?

Perhaps there is not a person in the county of Warren who has not heard of Mrs. Hays, of Horicon, who it is asserted, lived nearly two years without nourishment, that during that time she has swallowed only an occassional drop of water. Can this be so? Can it be true that she is an exception to the physiological laws that govern our being? or are these laws natural, or ordained only for a part of mankind, or is it true that the laws which creative wisdom has imposed apply to all, and are imperious? In this matter, the unanimous verdict of every one must be, that, it is impossible for a person to live without aliment. This needs no demonstration. It is self-evident—a fact known and felt by all.

We know that a person can live for a day without nourishment, therefore, why not a year? The simple reason is, that there is an active, incessant, hourly and momently waste of the system, although there is a seeming identity of person. Like the rainbow which presents the aspect of permanent identity, yet, who does not

know, that a new bow is formed every instant by the falling rain drops, so, that the colors we see are in a state of swift transition.

The burning flame is apparently for a long time the same, yet there is a ceaseless change in its condition, caused by the chemical change of properties that carry on combustion. The flowing river presents the same general appearance to-day, as yesterday, yet it is made up momently of new atoms: just so with the human system; it is only the *form* and size that presents its unalterable aspect. This is deception. It is only the form that appears immutable, the constituent particles are forever changing. Like the rainbow—like the flower—like the river, so man's bodily force and activity originate in the transformation of particles that is constantly taking place in the system. As each part is brought into action, its atoms perish and others take their place—thus destruction and renewal are closely allied and proceed together in the vital economy. The rate at which the changes take place, though varied by circumstances, may be determined with some degree of accuracy.

The necessities of an adult in active life are found to be about 2 1-2 lbs avoirdupois of dry food daily. The amount of water about 4 lbs, of oxygen upwards of 2 lbs, which result from inhaling about 100 gallons of air. The amount of blood in the system is about one fifth the weight of the body, or 25 to 30 lbs, in a full sized person.

The heart beats about 70 times a minute, and every pulsation sends forward about 130 feet in

a minute. The whole passes through the heart in less than 8 minutes, or 8 to 10 times an hour, some 230 times a day, sometimes the circulation is even double this estimate.

To aid in carrying forward this wonderful process and assist in the various physical changes, several liquids to the amount of about twenty pounds, are daily poured out, the principal of which is the gastric juice. During the same time there escapes from the lungs carbonic acid and watery vapor, to the amount of 2 or 3 pounds; through the pores of the skin there escape about 2 1-2 lbs of water, and in other directions about 2 1-2 lbs of matter.

Reckoning 2 1-2 lbs of solid food consumed daily, amounts to 900 lbs a year, the amount of oxgyen but little less; the amount of liquids taken in various forms daily is estimated at a little over 4 pounds, or about 1500 lbs a year, making an aggregate of more than 3000 lbs annually taken into the system for its support.—This demand of 3000 pounds of aliment yearly, to cherish the system, is required, because that amount has been exhausted,used up in the growth and waste of the system, during the time, in the exercise of the powers and functions of the body.

If the atmosphere be taken from us we die. If aliment be withheld, terrible agony follows and in a little time death ensues.

Hunger and thirst are faithful monitors, warning us constantly of the rapid changes of our system, and that the incessant demands for nourishment are pressing, and imperious. The Divine architect has created a life-demand for nutriment

which cannot be repudiated but upon the peril of our existence, although to obtain it, it costs an earnest life-long struggle both of body and mind. These vigilent sentinel's hunger and thirst cannot be dislodged or bribed while life endures, but are incessantly proclaiming that further nourishment is required to supply the waste that the physiological laws has imposed. These things are not voluntary with us, cannot be controlled at will or determined by reason. If they were, voluntary forgetfulness or indolence might defeat the purposes of nature.

It is the silliest of silly nonsense to say that a person may be nourished by, or live on their blood! or that the inhalation of various gases will support life.

There is no self-sustaining principle in the animal system. It possesses no power of creating a single particle of matter which it uses. Every atom of nourishment must be from some external source.

During youth, the supply is greater than waste —receipts greater than expenditure. The ballance of the reception above the loss goes to increase the growth of the body.

In old age it is the reverse. The bodily weight slowly decreases. The waste is greater than the supply, and the ballance when struck, tells against our vitality. Particle by particle the system is wasted, passing into the conditions of death.

Though we are "wonderfully and fearfully made," yet it is for us to understand the curious mechanism of the human system, to know a reason for every action, and able to solve every physiological problem.

Before the days of Hervey, little was known of the circulation of the blood. The heart was the object of the wildest, and most superstitious speculation. By some it was supposed that the blood flowed from the heart during the day, and returned at night.

Once the stomach was deemed the home of a conjuror who had the whole system under its control, when pleased, the stomach performed its office, and we were well; when angry, the most wholesome food was spoiled and sickness followed.

The time was when the simple, though wonderful operations of the eye were a sealed mystery, and it was supposed that the whole system acted under some mysterious power that defied the closest investigation.

But inquiry and investigation have showed, and reason demonstrated, that the whole system acts invariably in obeyance to immutable laws—that the human constitution is not beyond the illustration of reason.

Philosophy and Chemistry, in this, as well as in other things, are dispelling the superstitious vagaries that have so long existed, and enabling us to understand how these wonderful changes occur. Knowledge is progressing—reason is at work, and we are continually getting a more critical knowledge, and understanding more clearly the philosophy of life.

We are conscious of an existence; and since the faculty to know our own indetity as given us, we have an assurance of a still greater power, the ability to understand the various conditions of life.

And I am not aware that Creative wisdom has hid any needful knowledge from us, or so far blinded our understanding that we are unable to comprehend these things. I know not why the physiological problem of life should be placed above our reason—why the intellect of man

should not be able to grasp, and comprehend a matter which is of such vital importance to his well-being.

ADOLPH.

In reply to the above we have the following from Dr. J. L. Stoddard, of Glen's Falls, who visited Mrs. Hays and made a critical investigation, as far as the case was susceptible of being investigated:—

THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING.

Mr. Editor, you may imagine us seated by our taper, in this house in the woods, with no rattling carriages, or noisy boys to disturb us, and all is still, save the dismal creaking of crickets, and the hooting of owls, upon the surrounding hills, who seem ambitious to make the night hideous with their horrid vocals, and also, to a new comer, the still more grating sounds, of a woman in spasms, which exceed the descriptions which the most vivid imagination has attempted to paint, as "the death struggles." It seems as though nature was convulsed with mortal agony, and writhing in all the frightful contortions that nerve or muscle could be drawn.

I have a number of pages which I took down of Mr. Hays' statements and affidavits, and the testimony and affidavits of others, but as the statements already made about Mrs. Hays are substantially correct, I will only state, that for two years past, she has not eaten as much as she would eat at one meal when in health—that she has not swallowed anything, not even a drop of water, since the 20th of February 1857, and has not had a discharge from her bowels since June 1856, and no passage of water since February 1857.

Any physician wishing any specific facts in relation to her case, which I have in my possession, I shall be happy to furnish them.

It will now be asked, what our opinion is, in relation to this remarkable case—is it fraud, or reality, and if it is reality, how is the woman sustained without eating?

That the woman has suffered from severe spasms for a long time, I think none doubt, whose opinions are worth regarding. Every one who has seen her, for any length of time, has witnessed a most heart sickening sight, of a woman writhing in awful agony, as though every nerve was charged by a galvanic battery. This, however, would give the case no such remarkable interest, as to excite the special attention of the scientific world, unless there was something more of it. The peculiar interest in this case, consists in the fact of her going without food, or nearly so, for about two years. I have been frequently asked since my return, if I believe this woman does go without food.

I do believe it, and shall continue to do so, until the evidence which sustains that position is rebutted. It is a very easy argument to *say* that Mr. Hays and his neighbors have combined together to perpetrate a fraud, and that they have perjured themselves, but it is no argument —we want the *proof*. It is a question in reference to a fact of a new and wonderful nature, and nothing but direct proof, which relates to this particular case, is admissible.

Facts and arguments which apply to natural phenomena, are not applicable to an abnormal case, or a *Lusus naturæ*. This is a sufficient reply to "Adolph." But we shall have occasion to refer to him again. We will briefly sum up the evidence upon which our belief is founded, and yet we are glad to learn that there is to be a watch instituted—this will be a demonstration. If there is a fraud, whoever detects it will confer a great favor upon community, and relieve the scientific world of a perplexing embarrassment. Whenever it is proven that she eats, we shall be glad to believe it, yet for the present, we prefer to be duped, (if we are) rather than to take the ground, in the face of so much testimony, that it is all a hoax. To the argument, then.

1. The character of Mr. Hays is such, as to make his statements and affidavits worthy of confidence. Where is the man who will undertake to impeach Mr. Hays? Every person, so far as we can learn, who has known him from his boyhood up, gives him a character for strict truth and veracity. All who know him, say he is morally incapable of perpetrating such an audacious fraud.

2. We have the testimony and affidavits of different persons who have had every means of knowing whether she eats or not. Mrs. Bruce was with her three weeks and three days, night and day, and she testifies that she does not think it possible that she could have had anything to eat without her knowing it. She had frequent spells of retching and heaving, but never threw up anything that indicated that she had taken food. Mrs. Gardner was with her two weeks, and testifies to the same thing. All the neighbors, who have frequently been in, hold the same opinion.

3. We have also the argument, drawn from the absence of any motive for such a fraud.

What are they making by such a hoax? Simply poverty, wretchedness and perjury. There is nothing more to be made by her not eating, than though she ate. Let any one go to the house, and this argument will have a force to it, that it cannot have to others. Now here is already testimony strong enough to hang a man for murder; it certainly, therefore, ought to establish a fact of this kind.

But this is not all, we have another argument stronger to our minds than all the others, and which we hold to be conclusive. The argument is—

4. The physiological condition of the woman is such as, to render it *impossible* for her to receive nourishment.—She is in almost continuous spasms of her whole body—mouth, throat, stomach, &c., which renders deglutition impossible. There are also frequent and violent heaving and retching, at the bare smell of food, ever so secretly carried into the room. While I was there, she had frequent turns

of retching, which would have shown evidence of her having eaten, if she had taken food. I secretly approached toward her bedside, after simply having handled bread and it set her to heaving violently. I tested it in various ways, until I was fully satisfied, that even the presence of food in the room would produce spasmodic retching, which would render deglutition *impossible*. As well might you talk of a person taking food, while under the operation of an emetic, as for this woman to take food in the condition she is in. We simply pity the man, especially the physician, who can assert "she gets up nights to eat"—or that she eats at all. Now take all these evidences together—the statements and affidavits (for we had them sworn) of respectable and competent persons—the want of motive for deception in the case, and the physiological condition of the woman, and who can doubt about her not eating. It is the highest kind of testimony which the nature of the case admits of, and is sufficient to establish the highest crime on the statute book. If she should take food to-morrow, it would not prove that she has eaten before in seven months, unless you could impeach the testimony of those who have witnessed to that fact; and also, that her symptoms and condition have not changed. If her disease should change, then she may eat, but that will not alter the facts in relation to what has been, for that would still rest upon good testimony, unless you can impeach it. We hold it then, as proven, that she has not eaten anything for seven months, and not as much as an ordinary meal, for about twenty-six months.

It is boldly stated, that it is *impossible* that she should live so long without eating; for it is contrary to a well known and universal law of nature.

"Adolph," I suppose, thinks he has demonstrated this fact, so that no one has a right to doubt it hereafter. He assumes that there is a certain amount of waste to the system, daily, therefore, there must be a definite supply to equal it, or else she would waste away to nothing.

What he says may approximate to the truth, *in a normal condition of the system, but for an abnormal or diseased condition*, it may be as far from the truth as the North pole is from the South. Mrs. Hays, being in a *diseased* condition, his facts (?) do not apply to her case, no more than the laws of combustion, apply to a pile of green wood, or the troubles in Kansas.. Suppose I should state that it was an "imperious" law that a certain amount of light was required to please the eye and enable us to see clearly, would that prove that the same amount was necessary and agreeable in certain diseased conditions of our optics? The light through a hundred panes of glass would not be unpleasant to a healthy eye, but one highly inflamed, could not have the light from one pane, without excruciating suffering, and perhaps complete blindness. Here is an exception to the general law—*an abnormal condition.* Such we contend is the fact in the case of Mrs. Hays.

There is such a thing, as "logic running mad," and unless "snubbed" by facts now and then, it is liable to cut up some wonderful antics. One *fact*, is worth all the logic and inferences in the universe. When Herschel turned his great telescope to the heavens, and saw worlds on worlds revolving in space, the old lady who had *logically* come to the conclusion, that the stars were gimlet holes to let glory through, had to change her views. So we think of "Adolph," when he looks at *facts*, he will view things in a very different light. A fact is a fact, in spite of all the theories and logic in the world; and if it is proven that the woman goes without eating then all the arguments about waste and supply go for naught. If it is a fact, then you have a scientific question of great interest to settle; but if it is not, then there is no peculiar interest in the case, except that the man humbugged the people, and that he and all his neighbors ought to be sent to Sing Sing for perjury.

We think the arguments we have advanced, establish the fact that she does not eat. We may not be able, however, to explain the philosophy of that fact, yet that does not diminish the interest we have in it, as a wonderful phenomenon, which the human system is capable of exhibiting, and perhaps, it may bring to light some new ideas of pathology or ethiology, symptomathology and therapeutics. It should, therefore, be demonstrated beyond cavil, by those who are interested in science; and I hope the medical profession will take the subject up, in a way to satisfy themselves and the world. Assuming then, that it is proven that she does not eat, we are prepared to philosophize on the subject, and account if we can, for this remarkable phenomenon.

We shall venture a suggestion, without committing ourselves very strongly to it, for the purpose of eliciting investigation and light on the subject, holding ourselves ready to embrace the truth when it shall be developed.

As she takes no nourishment, it is self evident, that the loss from her system is very slight, or she would become emaciated, which she does not, at least, but very slightly. This fact seems to show that the functions of the nutritive system are suspended—perhaps in consequence of a derangement of the nervous apparatus which is involved in carrying on the nutritive process, including disintegration and expulsion as well as supply.

There is such an obstruction or derangement of the *vital force* of the nutritive apparatus, as to suspend its functions. "However abundant may be the supply of the nutritive materials, and however complete may be their preparedness for organization, they can no more become organized into cells by their own power, than a mass of iron could shape itself into a steam engine, or a spinning jenny. *They need to be acted on by the appropriate force*"—"*vital action.*" "The introduction of oxygen into the blood by the lungs, maintains that peculiar vivifying power by which the nerves and muscular system are kept in a state fit for

activity." There is then, in her case, simply action of the lungs, heart, and a portion of the nervous system, and they are supplied with nourishment enough to keep up vitality, from the air received into the lungs. The organic system remains *in statu quo*. The blood she had at the time this accident happened, or this abnormal condition took place, is going its busy round, with but little loss, and is being revitalized every time it passes through the lungs, and perhaps it will continue to do so until it diminishes to a certain point, unless there is some change in her case, when death will ensue.

But it is said that her skin is moist, therefore, there must be consederable waste. There can be but a trifle more carried off by insensible perspiration, than is absorbed into the system from the air taken in at the lungs, or else she would have dried to a mummy, within the seven months that she has taken no water.

There are conditions of the system in which persons cannot eat, and it may be that the God of nature has wisely arranged it so that there should be an accommodating suspension, partial or entire, of the action of the nutritive system, (including waste) so that life may be maintained for a greater length of time. This we hold is quite common in sickness; so to speak, the nutritive system is also sick, and suspends its action, as do other organs of the body their functions. I say suspend—it would perhaps be more correct to say, that each cell of the organized structure is endowed with an unusual amount of vital life-preserving power, which retards or suspends their usual rapid degradation to inorganic matter, which is so much loss to the system.

True, Mrs Hays' case is a remarkable case of suspension of this kind. It is more perfect, perhaps, than has ever before occurred; at least her system has maintained that condition longer.

A very similar case has come under my observation, where the individual lay ten or twelve weeks without food, and without remarkable emaciation. The nutritive system then rallied and there was a demand for food.

Now apply the reasoning of "Adolph." According to his views, if a man goes without food for a certain number of days, he will be a certain number of pounds lighter, according to a universal law of waste, in carrying on the functions of the system. I had a patient who went twenty-one days without food. Now figure up, according to "Adolph," and this individual, allowing for a little water which she took, would weigh about ten pounds, there being about one hundred pounds loss. This may answer "Adolph's" purpose, but the *facts* are, she weighed about one hundred pounds at the end of the time and only lost ten.

We have also cases authentically reported where one man went thirty-one days, and another forty, with similar results. The man who went forty days, according to "Adolph," would weigh less than nothing, and Mrs. Hays about 5885 lbs less than nothing. "Adolph's" table is made up for a state of health, I repeat, and not for abnormal conditions.

We assert, then, that there is a state into which the system may be brought by disease, where the process of waste is not carried on as usual, and if this condition remains perfect, or so nearly so, that waste may be supplied through the lungs, then a person may live, we know not how long. We have made these remarks for the sake of calling attention to the case, in order that the truth might be drawn out. We shall, hereafter, be ready to embrace any explanation of her case that may be consistent.

It is constantly asked, what is the disease which has induced this state of things?

It is our private opinion, that it is brought about by a remarkable, and perhaps somewhat peculiar, case of Hysteria. There may also be some disease of the spine. It is well known that this disease (Hysteria,) produces a "great disposition to spasms, and nervous attacks of many forms, great variation and contrariety in the natural phenomena of the system, remarkable idiosyncrasies and sympathies,

disorders of the digestive system, and great consequent sympathetic influence on the body."

There are several other things in relation to her case we should be glad to notice, but we have been too lengthy already.

J. L. STODDARD.

Glen's Falls, September 21, 1857.

The above communication drew forth a reply as might have been expected, and we insert, for the purpose of showing that the whole matter was thoroughly probed:

MRS. HAYS.

Mr. Editor:—Permit me to occupy a column of the *Messenger*, in reply to Dr. Stoddard's long review of my article on the "woman that lives without eating."

We acknowledge that Mrs. Hays' case is a remarkable one, that she is at times in awful agony, as every one will testify who has seen her; and, too, that it is truly heart-sickening to see a woman writhing in such terrible misery, every nerve drawn up to its highest tension, and the whole system racked with the most fearful paroxysm.

People are so constituted, that they cannot believe without evidence, and it requires pretty direct proof to convince one that laws which were ordained at "Creation's dawn," and have existed to the present, without an exception, are to be subverted, even in this fast age.

The Doctor's defense of Mr. Hays is certainly superfluous, for it is not his character that so much interests the public, but only the simple question, can life be sustained without nutriment?

It is a very easy argument to say that a person can live without food—yet *we* want proof. The Doctor himself will testify that a little

"Food now and then,
Is relished by the best of men."

People have tried to live without eating, the world over, time after time, and all have invariably failed, after a few weeks at farthest. Scarcely a mechanic in the country but what has tried to make a "perpetual motion," and all have failed, and ever will, because it is contrary to an immutable, natural law, to which there is no exception. Just so in the case of our existence, our vitality is governed by fixed laws, and to these laws there is no exception, and to violate them is death.

The position the Doctor has taken in this case, and he repeats it several times, is that "it is *impossible* for her to receive nourishment," yet he tells us there is to be a watch instituted to detect her if she eats. If she does not nor *cannot* eat, why place sentinels over her to watch? Truly, there seems to be a little doubt with the most sanguine. The Doctor again says, "if there *is* fraud, whoever detects it, will confer a great favor on the community, and relieve the scientific world of a great embarrassment." Here, again, seems to be doubt expressed in the matter, else why talk of detecting the fraud; nor do we think that it will be the "*scientific* world" that will be relieved, for we fancy the scientific world believes nothing of it, more than it does of Papal superstitions, or the Salem witchcraft.

Men of science and research, who understand thoroughly the whole mechanism and principle

of the human system, seem not very much "embarrassed," else why do they shake their heads so doubtfully.

He says there is testimony enough in this case to hang a man for murder, so there was testimony strong enough to hang forty men, that there actually was a sea serpent in Silver Lake, a year or two since. Yet with all this testimony, did it make it so? All have heard of Irish fairies, and multitudes will come up and tell you of their actual existence. In the Salem witchcraft, how solemnly those persons came up and affirmed that their neighbors were bewitched, and scores were put to death; yet did the accumulated testimony convince the "scientific world" that there was such a thing as witchcraft? Some even in these days have attributed the condition of Mrs. Hays to witchery.

We are not yet convinced that she cannot eat; we are not aware that there is any contraction of the muscles that prevents mastication or deglutition. It would seem to require less effort to masticate food, than it does to throw her teeth together with such force as she sometimes does —and as she can articulate or talk, I do not know why she cannot swallow liquids, at least. That she has occasional "spasmodic retchings," does not imply that she does not at times crave food, more than a dose of tartarized antimony or ipecac, should ever after destroy all sense of hunger or desire for food.

Those heavings of the stomach may not be caused wholly by the smell of food, for they occur at times when the olfactory nerves are not offended by the odor of any edible substance.

The Doctor says, "we simply pity the man who asserts that she can eat at all." We are truly grateful for this gratuitous compassion, yet really we do not know that one is deserving of any pity or commendation either, for believing a truth, more than for doing right; for believing anything which is sustained by immutable laws —laws established by Creative Wisdom, and as unchanging as the laws of the universe. And in turn, we have compassion for those healers of men, who believe that it is not for man to understand the changes that go on in the corporeal system; that it is the scene of an incomprehensible power that defies the closest scrutiny, and is above our reason; that the system is not amenable to investigation, and is controlled by capricious laws.

He explains her case by saying, "there is then, in her case, simple action of the lungs, heart, and a portion of the nervous system; and they are supplied with nourishment enough to keep up vitality *by the air* received into the lungs."

If the other organs of the body (save the heart and lungs,) have not been in action, nor acted upon for twenty-six months, would they not long ago, not only have become putrid, but completely destroyed; for there is constantly a rapid transformation taking place of the particles that make up our system, and more especially after death, a rapid decomposition takes place.

We are not convinced that the other organs of the body have lost their vitality. If there is no action of the stomach, what should cause those "retchings?" And, too, the blood seems to circulate freely and regularly in all parts of the

system. Since respiration and the circulation of the blood are regular, it would seem that none of the organs should lie dormant, for respiration is nothing more than a species of combustion, the oxygen is taken up by the lungs and absorbed by the blood, diffusing through the whole system, heat and vitality.

Now the Doctor knows as well as any one, that the air is not a part of our nourishment, more than the air is part of the fuel we burn in our stoves. Every one knows the air is composed chiefly of oxygen and nitrogen. Nitrogen is the base of nitric acid or aquafortis, and will not of itself sustain life; and if we inhale more than an ordinary proportion of oxygen, respiration becomes hurried, we are feverish from over excitement and soon die from exhaustion.

If atmospheric air of itself will sustain life, why should the sensation of hunger and thirst be so imperative? Why any sense of hunger at all? What necessity of any solid or liquid food, and why such terrible agony, if they be withheld?

And if the air be the only substance required to form the body-structure, and keep in operation every tissue, and springing muscle, and telegraphic nerve, it would seem that a person need hardly die at all, or so long as air could be forced into the lungs. Though the air supports life in the same manner that it does the burning flame, yet it becomes evident, from the most conclusive proof, that in itself, there is not a particle of nutritious matter. Our vitality, activity, and susceptibility, and the various endowments of the system, proceed from the chemical action and

transformation of particles taking place in the system—matter which it has received from without. In this matter of living without food, hear Prof. Youman, one of the first chemists in the country:—

WHAT ODDS DOES IT MAKE WHETHER YOU CALL IT STARVING OR BURNING.—Professor Youman, in a learned lecture on chemistry, said:—

"What is the relation of oxygen to the human system? Every animal is busy drawing in and throwing out air—and increasing tidal ebb and flow. The oxygen of the air passes through the membranes of the lungs, is taken up by the blood, and carried to all parts of the body. It does here what it does everywhere—it burns. Slow combustion goes on in the body, and carbonic acid and water are produced. This combustion is necessary to keep up heat and fever, and the oxygen of the air must have carbon and hydrogen, in the form of food and drink, to feed upon. Cut off a man from everything but air, and the oxygen at every breath will cut away a portion of his own frame. The most combustible parts are first consumed; he grows lighter and more emaciated every hour. First, the fat disappears, then the muscles are assailed, and lastly, the devouring giant, oxygen, attacks the brain and nerves, delirium ensues, and death closes the scene. Men say he has starved to death, but the scientific truth is, that he has been burned to cinders."

ADOLPH.

THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING.

Mr. Editor:—We did not reply to "Adolph" from any personal considerations, either on his, or our own part, but for the interest Science has in this case. Mr. Hays deserves protection from the libelous insinuations of an anonymous letter writer, who undertakes to settle a question not only of fact, but of veracity, by a false and dangerous mode of *a priori* reasoning. Now, every child knows that as a general rule, we have to eat in order to live, so all the time spent on this proposition is lost; but to infer from this general fact that in a specific and defined case, the same law applies in all its rigid construction and application, is jumping at a conclusion with a vengeance.

That this is a remarkable case, we admit as freely as the most skeptical. That there are, however, conditions of the system, as manifested in some diseases, which furnish some analogy to this case, though far inferior to it, we showed in our last, and still claim. When he disposes of the facts we gave him, with any other argument than it isn't so, we will furnish him with other proof of exceptions to "laws which were ordained at Creation's dawn."

The mode he adopts to settle this question, is in violation of the approved Baconic system of reasoning. He proves facts by philosophy, instead of philosophy by facts. He undertakes to settle an anomalous fact, by the application of rules and principles which only apply to general or common conditions of life. Now the very idea of its being, or claiming to be an anomaly, precludes the propriety of such a course of reasoning. He cannot evade this by saying his philosophy is based upon a fact—the fact that all have to eat, and therefore she eats; for this is begging the whole question—the very thing in dispute. The question is whether she is an anomaly, and this is to be settled by proper demonstrative evidence, and not by philosophy.

Apply "Adolph's" reasoning to another subject—say the "Siamese Twins," and see what it will prove there. It is a law "ordained at Creation's dawn," that children should be born without a fleshy chord to tie them together, therefore, there are no "Siamese Twins," and all creation has been humbugged, except the "scientific world who believes nothing of it, more than it does of the Papal superstitions or the Salem witchcraft." Now, if "Adolph" will give us an article on the "Twins," I have no doubt but what he can reason them apart scientifically. We have heard that they talk of being separated perhaps it would hurt them less to have him do it on paper, than to have it done with a scalpel. We might furnish an almost endless chain of anomalous facts to illustrate the fallacy of his reasoning, but

this one is enough. We shall hereafter know how to be scientific—deny everything except what we think we can explain.

Now, what we say is, that this case is simply a question of fact, and is to be settled only as a fact, by direct and positive testimony—by such testimony as we admit to establish any other unusual fact of grave interest. We claim, notwithstanding all the talk of "Adolph," of "perpetual motion," and oft repeated declarations of "*no exceptions*," that we submitted a fair case for the jury to decide upon, and that according to the rules of logic, and weight of evidence, the verdict should be in favor of the woman's not eating. It is just such evidence as we implicitly rely upon in the most important cases where proof is required, viz: the testimony of those who know the facts, and have no motive for deception. If we had as strong proof that a man had committed murder, as that Mrs. Hays goes without eating, he would be hung as sure as he had a neck.

The evidence we relied upon, was that of Mr. Hays, who knows without a doubt or quibble, whether she eats or not. To say he is deceived, is to shuffle the question; a cowardly dodge to evade conclusions which are humbling to one who professes to know all about what God has done and is doing in his universe. Mr. Hays swears positively, and without any reservation, that she does not eat, and he has all the opportunity to know that it is possible for any to have. Here is a *positive* link in the chain of evidence. Circumstances are such as to preclude the possibility of collusion with some unknown person. It would be a greater stretch of fancy to believe that in this case, deception could be carried on for two years, than to admit that she goes without eating.

"Adolph" seems to think that the character of Mr. Hays has nothing to do with the question. It is strange indeed if the character of a witness has nothing to do with the credibility of his testimony, and we made a great blunder in taking so much pains to find out what his reputation for truth is. He has a character for truth and veracity which no man dares to gainsay, and for that reason, we placed confidence in his word and oath, and shall rely upon it, until he is impeached. We may also say the same of all the witnesses who have made oath to their statements.

We also mentioned the testimony of Mrs. Bruce, and Mrs. Gardner. Mrs. Bruce was with her three weeks, night and day; and it can easily be understood, by at least those who are accustomed to watching with the sick, that it is altogether improbable that she could be in the room with her, (for there is but one room in the house) and know all about the food, and when she slept, be within six feet of her, so as to hear every movement;

we say it is highly improbable that she should be placed in such circumstances and not know whether there was deception carried on or not. Mrs. Hays is incapable of rising from her bed or feeding herself, and if there had been anybody mousing about to put food in her mouth, Mrs. B. would be likely to know it.

It is simply frivolous, and trifling with the subject, to say all these persons are "deceived or mistaken."

Mrs. Bruce also testifies, that she could not have food in the room without retching and heaving, and that she did frequently have spells of heaving, but never threw up anything, except a little bloody, watery fluid. She had sufficient means of knowing whether Mrs. Hays was sustained by food furnished her or not, and we call upon "Adolph," as in the case of Mr. Hays, to settle the question of her veracity. *Have these individuals perjured themselves?* Will Adolph meet the question fairly and show us that they are guilty of perjury, or show by what means they have been deceived? If those who have been with her constantly, do not know of her eating, how could she, helpless and insensible as she is, and tortured with almost perpetual spasms, be supplied with food?

We also urged the want of motive for such a deception—a very important point in receiving testimony. Will "Adolph" show us what motive they have for such a fraud?—We lastly gave it as our opinion that the physiological condition of the woman was such as to render it impossible for her to eat. How much weight this argument should have, we leave for others to decide. For our own part, however, after remaining with her for eighteen hours, and testing it in every way we could, and then having the affidavits of different persons, that the condition in which we saw her was her usual condition, we were satisfied that she could not, and did not eat; and we are happy to know that several physicians who have visited her and understand the "*principle* of the human system" do not "shake their heads so doubtfully," but agree with us on this point—or rather we agree with them.

We are now permitted to add the testimony of individuals who have been on guard for two weeks, night and day, for the express purpose of detecting her in eating. Mr. Samuel Dickinson informed me that they did not detect her in eating or drinking anything Now here was a grand chance for "Adolph" to display his ingenuity and show up the fraud. We are credibly informed that he was invited to aid in detecting the fraud, if there was one, but he neglected to improve the opportunity. Now it seems to us that if he is as confident as he professes to be, that there is fraud, he would have improved such a chance to show it. He would either have gone himself or have seen

to it, as he was invited to do, that those who understand the "principle of the human system" and "shake their heads so doubtfully," should be placed upon that watch to detect and expose the deception. No doubt he will have a good excuse, and as many as choose will be satisfied with it. We think however, after taking the ground he has, there was some obligation to aid in furnishing a positive demonstration. His *opinion* may be sufficient for him, but the people had rather have the fact.

I have been there once, but if "Adolph will go there with me (or my substitute in case I am unable to leave home,) I will stay as long as he wishes, in order to have him show how the trick is done. I am willing to take as much trouble as that, for the interest I have in it as a scientific question. It is of too much importance to be settled by a guerilla paper warfare. As to the watch which was placed over her, we can say nothing, for we are not acquainted with their characters, or the manner in which they discharged their duty. It is fair, however, to presume, that it was faithfully done until the contrary is shown. I cannot, in this article, which is already too long, speak of the philosophy of her case, but some day I hope to treat it more "scientifically."

J. L. STODDARD.

We now give a letter from an intelligent physician in Warrensburgh, L. Charrette, M. D. He presents many interesting cases, though not exactly of the same type as that of Mrs. Hays:

ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD.

Having recently visited "the Woman that lives without eating," and judging from what I have seen of her, I have fully made up my mind that she does not eat, and has not for a considerable length of time. How she does live, is not a question for me to consider at this time, for I do not know; but the stern fact is staring us in the face uncontroverted and must be admitted, *nolens volens*.

From the appearance of the patient at the time I saw her, I can conceive no reason why she cannot live another year, or more without food or drink. She has a more healthy look now, after a year's abstinence, than many women who are well and consuming a good allowance of food every day. But my object in this communication is not to philosophize, but to show that

her case, though mysterious, is not altogether new and peculiar, for cases equally, and more astonishing, are on record in our medical works. Of the anomalous cases on the secretions of the body, Eberle says, vol. 2, p. 335. 'It is by no means rare for some individuals to have but one or two natural evacuations in a week; and cases have been reported that weeks, months, and in one instance, seven years elapsed without the appearance of an evacuation." And again, in speaking of suppression of the Urine, he says, "there are cases, who evacuated no urine for seven weeks, and in one case, six months; and also of the vicarious secretion of that fluid from the umbilicus, ears and stomach, and by the skin." vol. 2, p, 403.

Of abstinence, Dr. J. M. Good, says, "there are some tribes of animals that appear capable of subsisting on water alone, and a few on mere air; leeches, tadpoles, toads, lizards and serpents, are proofs of this assertion; and there are various kinds of fishes that live on simply water."

Rondelet kept a fish on water alone, for three years, and at the end of that period it had grown as large as the glass globe that contained it. The carp kind, especially the gold fish, have a similar power, and the pike, the most gluttonous of the tribe will both live and thrive on water alone, in a marble basin. These observations lead us to the anomaly of a more extraordinary nature; and that is the power which man possesses of existing without food, or on water alone for a considerable length of time. These cases occur under certain circumstances, as in cases of madness, especially of the melancholic kind, in which the patient refuses to eat or drink for many weeks, with little loss of weight or strength.

The case of Cicely de Ridgeway, preserved among the records in the Tower of London, which state, "that in the reign of Edward III, having been condemned for the murder of her husband, she remained for forty days without food and drink. This was ascribed to a miracle, and in consequence the king granted a pardon.

The Cambridgeshire farmer's wife, who was buried under a snow storm, continued for ten or twelve days without food. In the Edinburgh Medical Essays for 1720, is a case mentioned of a young lady, who, in consequence of the death of her father, was thrown into a state of tetanic rigidity of all the muscles of the body, especially of the muscles of deglutition, so as to render her incapable of swallowing for two long and distinct periods of time; in the first instance for 84 days, and in the second, which occurred shortly afterwards, for 54 days, during which time she had no sense of hunger, or thirst, and had not lost much of her flesh.

Another case is that of Ann Moore. In consequence of difficulty of swallowing, she limited herself to a very small quantity of bread alone, and on March 17, 1807, relinquished even this, allowing herself only occasionally a little tea and water, and lived six years on this simple diet. She pretended to have suspended the use of even this during the ensuing September, but it appeared on investigation, that she was guilty of some degree of imposition; but the case is admitted to be a remarkable one, as she subsisted on nothing but an occassional draught of water.

Hildanus Halles, and other physiologists collected various instances of long duration of abstinence, some of them, indeed, extended to not less than sixteen years, but in general too losely written and attested, to be entitled to much confidence.

In the philosophical transactions, there is a case recorded of a young man, who having drunk very freely of cold water while in profuse perspiration, was thrown into an inflamatory fever, from which he recovered with difficulty, and with a dislike to all kinds of food; for 18 years he never tasted anything but water. The fact was well known throughout the neighborhood; but an imposition having been suspected, a watch was instituted, and he was shut up at times, in close confinement for 90 days at a time, with the most scrupulous care that he should have nothing but water. He uniformly enjoyed good health, and appeared to have ejections, but seldom.

Perhaps the most singular case on record, and at the same time, the best authenticated, is that of Janet McLeod, published in the Philosophical Transactions, by Dr. McKenzie. She was at this time, 33 years of age, unmarried—from the age of 15, had had various paroxysms of Epilepsy, which had considerably shaken her frame, rendered the muscles of the eyelids paralytic, so that she could not see, but by lifting the lids up; and produced so rigid a locked jaw, that her mouth could rarely be forced open by any contrivance. She had nearly lost her power of speech, and deglutition, and all desire either to eat or drink. Her lower limbs were retracted toward her body—and seldom had any other egestion, than periodical discharges of blood, apparently from the lungs, and chiefly thrown out by the nostrils; attempts to give her food, invariably produced vomiting. On two occasions, after a total abstinence of many months, she made signs of wishing to drink. Some water was procured for her; on the first occasion, the whole was rejected, but she seemed greatly refreshed on having it rubbed on her throat. On the second occasion, she drank off a pint at once; with these exceptions, she passed upwards of four years without either liquids or solids of any kind. She laid for the most part, like a log of wood, with a feeble but distinct and regular pulse; her features

neither disfigured nor sunk, her bosom was round and prominent, and her limbs not emaciated.

Such is the history of some of the remarkable cases of anomaly on record; and without comment, or theorizing, I leave the case of Mrs. Hays to take her chance with those recorded.

December 10th, 1857.

At this date, we visited the Woman ourself, and made the following Editorial *Memoranda*:—

Mrs. Hays, the Woman that Lives without Eating.—Last week we had an opportunity of paying a visit to this remarkable woman. We could discover no change in her appearance, from the time we saw her before, some eight weeks ago. That she lives without eating, is, beyond all question, a fixed fact. The medical faculty may, or may not account for the phenomenon, the fact is before them, and we are pleased to know that physicians of distinction, in different parts, are taking an interest in the investigation of this most wonderful case. No one should visit the village of Chester, without going to see with their own eyes, a sight which language entirely fails to adequately describe.

We copy the following from the Glen's Falls *Republican*, with the Editor's remarks. It is a well written article, and substantially the same as we received from Mr. Hays. We have been personally acquainted with Mr. Greene, for a number of years, and know his qualifications to judge correctly in any matter brought under his notice. With regard to her living 62 minutes without breathing, her husband informed us, that in one instance, he thinks, she continued much longer, although he was unable to mark the time:—

THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING.

The following interesting and succinct account of Mrs. Hays, the woman who "lives without eating," was written by Wm. H. Greene, Esq., who lives but a short distance from Mrs. Hays, in the village of Chester, in this County. It is taken from the Saratoga *Republican*:—

Chester, Feb. 22d, 1858.

Friend Yonge, *Ed. Rep*:—Agreeable to your request, I herewith send you a statement of facts relative to Mrs. Betsey Hays, the woman that lives without food or drink. The facts stated may be relied on, most of them having come under my observation, and all can be well authenticated by conclusive proof:

Mrs. Hays, wife of Simeon Hays, was brought to this place, (Chester,) about four months ago, from Horicon, Warren county, N. Y., where she had lived since she was married to Hays, about January 1846. Her first child was born in January, 1847, a second child was born about one year thereafter, a third about one year after the second, and a fourth child was born four years ago last July. Mrs. Hays was twenty-seven years old, last April, I believe, the eleventh day. About three years ago, last November, she was taken with lameness in the back, and across the hips, and became unable to stand upon her feet. As her nurse was assisting her from a bed to a chair, she fell to the floor, and was confined to her bed, until July, 1855, when she was taken with spasms, which continued about one year, frequently as long as four days without interruption. She at intervals complained of pain in her back, head and stomach, and occasionally took some blackberries, raspberries, broth, and stewed apples, by way of nourishment, during the first year of the spasm. During the fall and winter of 1856–7, she drank the juice of about twelve lemons, in the form of lemonade, but since the 20th of February, 1857, she has *not taken any food or drink!* The spasms were very severe at first, often drawing her heels and head together on her back. At times, some perspiration is observed upon the surface, which presents a healthy appearance. Since November, '57, the presence of food, or the entrance of a person on using snuff, tobacco, perfumery, &c., will immediately produce nausea, and retching spasms, but nothing is vomited. This, together with the constant presence of spasms, precludes the idea that the woman eats.

In the fall of 1856, she is said to have found out [illegible] on three successive Sundays, after lying in them through the week, and then remained in a fit for two weeks.

Her feet are cramped, and most of the time, the side of one rests on the instep of the other, with the end of the toes imbedded in the ball. One hand (the left,) is permanently cramped down upon the breast, and rigidly confined in that location, while the right is drawn in various directions, at times, though mostly upon the stomach. While in the spasm, one of the shoulders is in constant motion, (the left,) while she breathes, the motion is performed by the right shoulder. She has been in convulsive cramps, I am informed on good authority, sixty-two minutes without breathing. I have seen her lay twenty-two minutes without breathing, the only perceptible sign of life, being the pulsation of the heart, the vibration of the left shoulder, occasional twitching of the eyelids, and rigid spasms. When breathing, the jaws are in constant motion, but this motion ceases when the breathing is suspended. At times, the jaw is dislocated, and thrown again in place with great rapidity, producing a series of sharp, cracking sounds in quick succession. Her sight and hearing appear to be gone, and all voluntary motion to have ceased, and only involuntary action exists.

The woman is now in this village, a few rods from my house; I have had an opportunity of seeing her frequently, and have no doubt of the truth of the foregoing statement. She is visited daily by scores of people, who are all convinced by ocular demonstration, that this wonderful woman does not eat, and unite in the inquiry—"how does she live?"

Yours, &c.,

WM. H. GREENE.

Of the hundreds that have visited Mrs. Hays many have recorded their observations through the press, but as they all tell nearly the same tale we shall only give the following extracts from the *Christian Advocate and Journal:*

THE WOMAN THAT LIVES WITHOUT EATING.

Our readers have been painfully interested by accounts of remarkable affliction suffered by a Mrs. Hays, who has lived for two years without food. A correspondent, Rev. L. N. Boudrye, writes from Ticonderoga, N. Y., as follows about the case :.

"My *Advocate* this week contains an article from E. Woodworth, stating that Mrs. Hays has died. Permit me to correct the statement. Mrs. H. *is yet alive*, and promises to live yet many days. I saw an article some time ago in an Albany paper, I believe the *Evening Journal* stating, that Mrs. H. had died, and that from her body was taken a snake or serpent, five feet long and half an inch thick! Whether the *Journal* ever corrected this statement, I know not. This might have been the source of your correspondent's information.

"A physician of our town, who is quite a scholar in anatomy and physiology, has lately visited Mrs. H. He stated to me to-day, some facts in this case that might be interesting to many. He says that Mrs. H.'s heart and lungs are perfectly sound, and her blood is in a healthy state, with a circulation quite perfect. This is the cause of the freshness of her system. The action of her stomach and liver is suspended. This accounts for her rejection of nutriment. The wear and waste of her body is very small, being principally on the fluids of the system, and only a very little in the muscular tissue. Her fits at the beginning, were rather hysterical, but now they partake more of the epileptic. Her existence may be solved in time, from the known laws of physiology. But whether it is or not from those laws, or from exceptional laws, we shall not yet doubt that the protracted abstinence of Mrs. Hays is a reality. All who have visited her, are forced to acknowledge that she neither eats nor drinks. Among these visitors, have been physicians from all parts of the country and the learned men of every profession; but their united experiments and wisdom have been baffled in trying to search out these mysteries."

Another correspondent, Rev H. M. Munser, (Creek Center, N. Y.) writes us,

"While I was in the room, at times she would lie on her back, with her head in a perpendicular position, the chin upward, and the top of the head resting on the pillow, the mouth wide open, and, if breathing, there was a constant shrugging of the right shoulder; but she frequently lies in this position, without breathing for several minutes at a time; and when she does not breathe, her left shoulder is in motion; and after remaining in this position for a time, she will suddenly rise to an erect sitting position, and instantly throw herself back again to the bed, with her head sometimes in a natural position; and this action being repeated several times, almost as quick as thought, she will at last throw her head so completely on her back, as to bury her entire face in the pillow, and her whole body raised from the bed several inches, her struggles for breath are indescribable. Why do not some of our medical colleges send a committee to make a thorough examination of this case?"

Rev. S. P. Williams writes to the *Advocate & Journal*,

"Mrs. Hays is not yet dead. I have seen her several times. And after reading all that has appeared in the *Advocate* in regard to her, venture to communicate a few thoughts upon her case. Before she passed into this peculiar and afflictive condition, her health was for some time, extremely poor. She ate but little, and that little occasioned a considerable amount of suffering. Sometimes it threw her into spasms. For nearly a year before she ceased to take refreshments altogether, she lived wholly, or nearly so, upon the juice of dried raspberries, until that became a source of suffering. Then, for a time, she took occasionally a small quantity of cold water; and it is now nearly a year since she swallowed any liquid, to the knowledge of any one. Indeed, I have no doubt that a teaspoonful of liquid put in her mouth, would be the cause of her death, unless the spasmodic action of her throat should expel it. Any person to see her ten minutes, must be satisfied that there is no deception in her case. Her head and shoulders, one or the other, are in perpetual motion. She is frequently thrown forward until she is nearly doubled together, and then the head thrown

back, and her neck literally doubled, and the body forced up, and the whole face, chin and all, buried in the pillow. This is done several times successively, in less time than I take in writing it. The last time in the series, the face will remain nearly buried in the pillow, and she does not breathe for ten or fifteen minutes. Once she remained sixty-two minutes without breathing. When this is over, and the spasm passes off, she struggles for breath, and the head is rolled from side to side, almost with the velocity of lightning, for a moment or two; the face becomes red with the rush of blood to the head, and the skin quite moist with perspiration. Then the spasms subsides into a gentle motion of the jaw and shoulder, keeping time, as one would think, with the action of the heart. Her skin about her face, neck, chest and hands, is delicate, and healthy as the skin of an infant. The pulsation of the blood about the chest, neck, head and arms, though exceedingly delicate, is quite regular. Her hair does not grow, nor is it worn off her head, as one would naturally suppose, except a little, just upon the crown. The action of the liver is entirely suspended, of course. The action and state of the lungs are perfectly healthy. They have been thoroughly examined by skillful physicians, with the aid of a stethoscope, and are supposed to be perfect. Her nourishment is

wholly from the atmosphere. The last nutriment, indeed, the last swallow of water she has been known to take, was in the last of June, 1857. The last time she was known to be conscious was last December. When she comes out of these spasms, she seems to cry for a moment, like an infant in distress. At such times, her husband thinks she may be conscious. It is most distressing to hear it. She is not above the ordinary laws of disease. She has recently had a thorough case of the mumps, precisely as others have them. Her nails upon her fingers, like her hair, do not grow at all."

In order to secure more comfort to Mr. Hays and family and give access to those from abroad who might be interested in the case, it was thought, by physicians, proper and safe, to remove the woman to the village of Chester. This removal was accomplished without producing any serious affect upon the patient,—the distance being some eight miles. A frame and bed, slung upon polls and borne by men, was the *modus operandi*. The village of Chester, where this WONDER of

wonders can be seen, is one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful and romantic villages that nestle amid the mountains of Northern New York. There is an excellent Plank Road from Glen's Falls passing through the village of Caldwell, or Lake George. Daily stages run between Chester and the Rail Road depot at Fort Edward, and Moreau Station.

To present more testimony, as to the *facts* of Mrs. Hays' living without food, would seem to be like "carrying Coal to New Castle;" yet we have procured the following names of men who know what they say and whereof they affirm—men who would neither deceive, nor be easily deceived. If numbers could add to the strength of proof, hundreds of reliable names could be readily obtained:—

CHESTER, May 20th, 1858.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Chester, county of Warren, State of New York, being well acquainted with Simeon Hays, and with the extraordinary circumstances connected with the sickness of his wife Betsey, do, without hesitation, certify our entire belief in the truthfulness of his statements, we having had abundant opportunity of detecting fraud, if any existed. Every possible test has been applied, and the conclusion to which we are forced, is, that Mrs. Hays *does, and has lived without eating*, since the 20th of February, 1857, being exactly fifteen months at the present date.

HON. WILLIAM HOTCHKISS, Ex. Sen.
JOHN H. WALKER, Justice of the Peace.
ALFRED MALLORY, M. D.
REV. H. S. REDFIELD.
REV. C. H. EDGERTON.
CHARLES H. FAXON, Esq.
WALTER A. FAXON, Esq.
MILTON SAWYER, Esq.

GLEN'S FALLS:

N. E. SHELDON, M. D. Pres. Warren Co. Med. Soc.
JAMES FERGUSON, M. D.
B. PECK, M. D.
M. R PECK, M. D.

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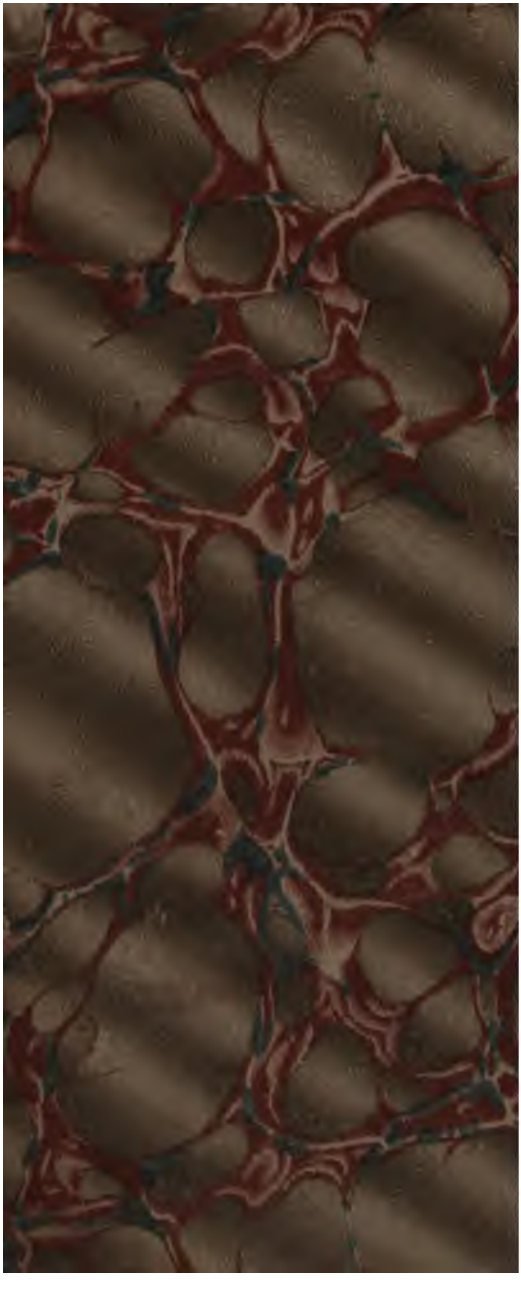
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